

Friis, John

From: Peter Freed [peterfreed@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2009 5:39 PM
To: Friis, John
Cc: eca_pace@yahoo.com; Saul Fussiner
Subject: HB6666, Section 5

March 15, 2009

To whom it may concern,

As a former student who benefited enormously from ECA, now an assistant professor of psychiatry at Columbia University, I wanted to voice my opposition to the bill that may close ECA (ACES) in New Haven.

The model works. It works brilliantly. It produces exceptional citizens, students, and artists. It should not be tampered with.

I attended ECA from 1982-1986, and the arts teachers there profoundly affected my life. In fact I transferred from Hopkins Grammer Day Prospect Hill school to Wilbur Cross HS in order to attend ECA!

The students and teachers I met there are still important people in my life. The ability of professional artists to teach at ECA is one of its central strengths; if the state were to short-sightedly force all teachers to be full-time it would defeat the purpose of an arts high school, which is to expose students to artists who are actively engaged in the professional arts world.

To make an analogy to other vocational programs, who would you rather teach car mechanics to high school students: a member of the pit crew for an Indy 500 car, or a full time teacher who hadn't worked in the professional environment for years? Would you rather gym teachers be full time, or be actively training for the olympics?

Preparing students for vocational work requires students who are actively involved in those vocations. The arts have, since the start of the enlightenment, been apprenticeship fields, and should remain that way.

As a wise man one said, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.' Please keep ECA/ACES the way it is: it is fulfilling its societal mission brilliantly.

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